

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown herein.

1. (Currently amended) A method for increasing immune competence of ~~an~~ animals, said method comprising inducing calcitriol synthesis in said animals ~~wherein said animal is selected from a group of poultry or pigs.~~

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~further comprising feeding said animal a food capable of~~ wherein inducing said calcitriol synthesis comprises feeding said animals a food that induces calcitriol synthesis.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2 wherein said food is has been supplemented or enriched with a substance capable of inducing calcitriol synthesis.

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 3 wherein said substance comprises a phyto-estrogen.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3 ~~4~~, wherein said ~~substance~~ phyto-estrogen is derived from a leguminous seed.

6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5 wherein said leguminous seed is soy.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~also~~ said inducing calcitriol synthesis activity further comprises increasing phytate degradation capacity of said animals ~~is increased.~~

8. (Currently amended) A method for preparing pig or poultry feed for increasing immune competence and/or phytate degradation capacity of pigs or poultry, said method comprising supplementing or enriching a pig or poultry feed with a substance capable of inducing calcitriol synthesis, wherein said substance is present in an amount sufficient to increase calcitriol synthesis in said pigs or poultry when administered in a normal amount of said pig or poultry feed.

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 8, wherein said substance comprises a phyto-estrogen.

10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 9, wherein said ~~substance~~ phyto-estrogen is derived from a leguminous seed.

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein said leguminous seed is soy.

12. Canceled

13. (Previously presented) A supplement for an animal food suitable for increasing immune competence and/or phytate degradation capacity of an animal, said supplement comprising a substance capable of inducing calcitriol synthesis, wherein said substance is present in an amount sufficient to induce calcitriol synthesis in said animal.

14. (Previously presented) The supplement of claim 13, wherein said substance comprises a phyto-estrogen.

15. (Currently amended) An animal food comprising a the supplement of claim 13.

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16. (Currently amended) A pig or poultry food enriched ~~for~~ with a sufficient amount of a substance capable of inducing calcitriol synthesis.

17. Canceled

18. (Currently amended) A method for increasing immune competence and/or phytate degradation of ~~an~~ animals selected from the group consisting of pigs and poultry comprising feeding said animals a food according to claim 16.

Claims 19-21 canceled

22. (Currently amended) A method ~~of reducing~~ for decreasing the dietary need for intake of antibiotics of in an animal, said method comprising:  
administering to said animal a food comprising a substance capable of inducing calcitriol synthesis; and  
inducing calcitriol synthesis in said animal.

23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein said substance comprises a phyto-estrogen.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 23, wherein said ~~substance~~ phyto-estrogen is derived from a leguminous seed.

25. (Currently amended) The method of claim 24, wherein said leguminous seed is soy.

26. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said animals are selected from the group consisting of poultry and pigs.

27. (New) A method of preparing an animal feed having a sufficient amount of a compound to induce calcitriol synthesis in an animal, said method comprising:

fractionating a plant or plant part;

selecting a fraction enriched for a compound selected from the group consisting of isoflavones, lignans, coumestrol, resorcylic acid lactones and mixtures thereof;

adding a sufficient amount of said fraction to an animal feed to induce calcitriol synthesis in an animal when said animal is fed a normal amount of said animal feed, thereby producing an enriched animal feed.

28. (New) The method according to claim 27, wherein said phyto-estrogen comprises isoflavones selected from the group consisting of genistein, genistin, daidzein and daidzin.

29. (New) The method according to claim 27, wherein fractionating said plant or plant part comprises fractionating a leguminous seed.

30. (New) A method of inducing calcitriol synthesis in pigs or poultry, said method comprising:

administering a food supplemented with a compound selected from the group consisting of isoflavones, lignans, coumestrol, resorcylic acid lactones and mixtures thereof to pigs or poultry; and

inducing calcitriol synthesis in said pigs or said poultry, thereby increasing immune competence or phytate degradation capacity in said pigs or said poultry.